

CONSERVOGRAM > The newsletter of the Soil and Water Conservation Society

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2017 National Conference on Cover Crops and Soil Health

Sheraton Indianapolis Hotel at Keystone Crossing
Indianapolis, Indiana
December 7-8, 2017
www.swcs.org/17CCSH

Registration is Now Open!

The 2017 National Conference on Cover Crops and Soil Health will offer a great opportunity to learn recent developments in how cover crops are being used by innovative farmers across the country and gain important insights on improving soil health from producers, conservation leaders, and scientists.

Whether you are contemplating cover crops for the first time, or you have years of experience and want to interact with soil health and cover crops innovators, this program will provide you with valuable information, networking, and learning opportunities.

The conference is intended for anyone interested in the practical use of cover crops and soil health improvement, including farmers; conservation agents; certified crop advisers (CCAs) and agribusiness staff; and university, nongovernmental organization (NGO), and agency representatives.

Headliners for the conference include:

- Keith Berns, a nationally known Nebraska farmer on the topic of carbonomics
- David Montgomery, a geologist and popular author on soils and erosion, whose latest book is titled *Growing a Revolution: Bringing Our Soil Back to Life*
- Dan DeSutter, a grain farmer from the central Corn Belt and a long-time no-tiller and cover crop user
- Trey Hill, a grain farmer from the eastern Corn Belt and also a long-time no-tiller and cover crop user
- Jimmy Emmons, a rancher and grain farmer from the Southern Plains, who grazes cover crops

Over 40 presenters, nearly half of them farmers with years of cover cropping experience, will be speaking in a variety of informative breakout sessions, including introduction to cover crops; advanced practices such as planting green and interseeding, grazing cover crops, managing herbicide resistant weeds with cover crops, and use of cover crops in horticulture and organic operations; and latest approaches on measuring soil health, building soil organic matter, and understanding soil biology.

Participants may choose from the following six breakout tracks:

- Basics of Cover Cropping
- Advanced Cover Cropping Insights from Farmer Experts
- Diving into Soil Health
- Cover Crop Role in the Cropping System
- Impacts of Cover Crops on Economics/Environment
- Special Topics with Cover Crops and Soil Health

Providing an opportunity for networking with speakers and service providers is a priority for the conference, and the exhibit hall will be designed to allow participant interaction with equipment, seed, and service providers important to practical cover crop and soil health implementation.

Optional farm tours near Indianapolis will also be available on the second afternoon following the conclusion of the main conference program.

For additional information, including a link to online registration, please visit swcs.org/17CCSH.

Annual Conference Presentations Available Online

Every year our annual conference is full of innovative, informative breakout sessions, but it's impossible for attendees to hear them all. Fortunately, we have uploaded the slideshows from all of the breakout sessions of the 2017 annual conference [online](#). You can revisit a presentation you attended or look over the ones you missed. You can even look back at presentations from the 2016 annual conference. If you weren't able to attend the conference this year, this is your chance to catch up on what some of your peers learned. Enjoy!



REGISTRATION IS OPEN!



**NATIONAL CONFERENCE ON
COVER CROPS
& SOIL HEALTH
HARVESTING
THE POTENTIAL**

DECEMBER 7-8, 2017 • INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

Upcoming Events

[North Dakota Chapter Farming with Healthier Soils Field Trip](#)
Mandan, North Dakota
September 15, 2017

[Razorback Chapter Annual Fall Meeting](#)
Booneville, Arkansas
October 5, 2017

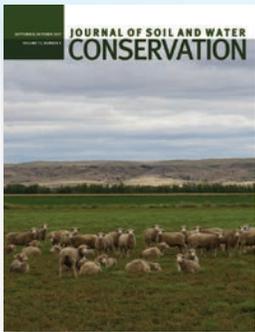
[Virginia Chapter Annual Meeting](#)
Ferrum, Virginia
October 17, 2017

[California-Nevada Chapter Annual Meeting](#)
Reno, Nevada
October 19-20, 2017

[Michigan Chapter Annual Meeting](#)
Antrim County, Michigan
November 1, 2017

[National Cover Crops Conference](#)
Indianapolis, Indiana
December 7-8, 2017

September/October Issue of the Journal



The September/October issue of the *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation* is now available online, and print copies are on their way. In this issue, a feature article by Blanco-Canqui and Wortmann compiles studies on the impact that crop residue removal has on wind erosion rates in order to make a recommendation for the minimum amount of residue that should be retained to reduce erosion risks. Also in the A Section, a viewpoint article by Hamilton et al. considers the common parameters used to determine national cover crop land area and proposes adjustments to better assess and set goals for cover crops on suitable land. The Research Section is packed full of studies on a range of conservation topics, including tools for estimating sediment and nutrient delivery to watersheds, the impact of land use on soil erosion rates, farmer incentive preferences for voluntary conservation practices, and cover crop effects on nitrogen leaching in an organic cropping system. Read these and more articles in the [online journal](#).

News from DC

Courtesy of SWCS DC Representative John Peterson

- Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue has named Tony Tooke as the [next chief of the US Forest Service](#), succeeding Tom Tidwell.
- President Trump nominated Bill Northey, the current agriculture secretary for the state of Iowa, to lead USDA's newly created Farm Production and Conservation (FPAC) mission area. If confirmed, Northey would oversee the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), Farm Service Agency, and the Risk Management Agency.
- Louisiana plans [\\$50 billion in flood control projects](#), but a report by Rand Corporation says that effort could increase the flooding risk in Mississippi.
- In a [paper published in Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences](#), researchers found that land use changes associated with planting crops and grazing livestock have caused a loss of 133 billion tons of carbon from soil worldwide over the last 12,000 years, amounting to about 13 years of global emissions at their current levels.
- Interior Secretary Ryan Zinke says he's asking President Trump to shrink "a handful" of national monuments that previous presidents designated to protect land and water.
- Soil health practices such as cover crops and no-till can result in an economic return of over \$100 per

acre, according to [a set of case studies](#) jointly released by the National Association of Conservation Districts and Datu Research, LLC.

- The Environmental Protection Agency is considering adopting new label language for dicamba herbicides to reduce the potential for soybean damage, estimated this season at more than 3 million acres throughout the South and Midwest.
- Following Hurricane Harvey, [losses to Texas'](#) \$100 billion agriculture industry have not even begun to be tallied. In addition, the Army Corps of Engineers released water from several dams to relieve pressure, contributing to the extensive flooding.
- The Forest Service and NRCS are accepting [proposals for 2018 funding](#) through the Joint Chiefs' Landscape Restoration Partnership. Proposals will be selected based on their capacity to measurably improve the health and resiliency of forest and rangeland ecosystems while contributing community benefits.

Conservation NewsBriefs: Popular Articles from August



Are you up-to-date with news about soil and water conservation research and policy? *Conservation NewsBriefs* is a highly informative e-news brief that delivers the most relevant content to your inbox each and every Thursday. Below are links to some of the most read articles from over the past month:

- [Digging in the dirt: Researchers develop new methods for assessing risk of subsurface phosphorus](#) (University of Delaware via ScienceDaily)
- [Farm bill pays high dividends for people and the environment](#) (The Hill)
- [US rice farmers turn sustainability into carbon credits, and Microsoft is first to buy](#) (Inside Climate News)
- [Algae, dead zones, climate change and the soil health movement](#) (The Progressive Farmer)

[Click here](#) to sign up and start receiving your weekly *Conservation NewsBriefs* today!

New Members

Welcome members who joined in August!

Arkansas—Razorback

Mara Grohs
Jaqueline Silva

California/Nevada

Tomas Aguilar-Campos

Connecticut/Massachusetts/Rhode Island—Southern New

England Chapter
Richard Vongkhamdy

Iowa

Michael Brennan
Chad Kloberdanz
Chris Owen

Illinois

Travis Deppe
Joan Huber
Dick Lyons

Kentucky—Bluegrass

William Lyons

Massachusetts—University of Massachusetts-Amherst

Student Chapter
Elizabeth Faxon

Michigan

Zach Curtis

Minnesota

Liz Perkus
Daniel Raskin

New Jersey—Firman E. Bear

Emily McCue

Pennsylvania—Keystone

Heidi Myer
Suzy Yetter

South Carolina

Natasha Bell

Tennessee

Sangeeta Bansal

Wisconsin

Rebecca Smith

Corporate Members

Please contact corporate.info@swcs.org for more details.

Gold



Silver



Bronze



From the Leadership: A Vision for SWCS Today

By Clare Lindahl, SWCS CEO



Almost a year ago to the day, I was bestowed a great professional honor—I became the president of the Soil and Water Conservation Society's Iowa Chapter. I stated in my campaign speech and my first newsletter article, "I have so much respect and admiration for the conservation professionals of this state, and it is an honor and a privilege to

serve the Iowa Chapter as president."

Today, I write to you having been bestowed the greatest professional honor of my career, as the CEO of the Soil and Water Conservation Society. It is now my privilege to serve the conservation professionals of this great nation and beyond who inspire me every day.

As your CEO, my vision is both rooted in the past and inspired by the present. I seek to modernize the Society while maintaining a connection to our roots. This will be accomplished through a number of ways:

1. Hearing from our members and partners

I seek to take all of my actions with the confidence they are serving our members, partners, and natural resources, and it is only with an open ear I can ensure this. I have started an "idea bank" and have held listening sessions with SWCS leaders and staff. I will extend these listening sessions to SWCS membership in the coming months by making calls, visiting chapters, offering polls and surveys, and creating other opportunities for your voices to be heard—I will continue to listen as long as I am your leader. In the words of Woodrow Wilson, "The ear of the leaders must ring with the voices of the people." Your voices and needs should serve as the foundation of the goals and priorities we set as a Society. Please remember, I cannot hear what is not being said. I am grateful for all of the engagement from the Board, staff, members, and partners I have received so far. Our idea bank is growing. Help us ensure it includes your voice.

2. Growing and diversifying our membership and partnerships

A diverse membership has been the vision of the soil and water conservation movement and Society from the start. As Hugh Hammond Bennett recognized in the first *Journal of Soil and Water Conservation*, soil conservation requires "engineering, agronomic, hydrologic, biologic, geologic, chemical, and other skills," and "teachers, industrialists,

students, doctors, union members, ministers, bankers, editors, legislators, and farmers—people in every walk of life." Seventy-one years later, we could add many other skills and professions to that list.

We have so much to gain by growing and diversifying the people who work in, understand, and care about soil and water conservation, and the Society is the organization to unify them. Ralph Husser kicked off the first SWCS journal with an article titled "Why Another Society," in which he stated, "The Society plans to promote and advance all phases of the science of conservation of soil and water and recognize the related fields in the promotion and advancement of the science." The Society has always acknowledged that diversity in fields is needed for soil and water conservation, and that is truer today than ever, making the need for a strong, modernized Society more important than ever.

3. Adding value

I will be seizing every opportunity to provide those working to advance soil and water conservation every advantage I can. Your job is difficult and your work important—you need every tool you can get, and the Society seeks to be your toolshed.

We will be taking on more special projects that can help you do your work and improving the way in which we communicate with you through our journal, events, publications, and other outreach efforts. We will improve the way in which we speak to the public and our leaders on your behalf and on the behalf of our natural resources.

Closing with a quote

I like quotes, as you can tell by now. To me a quote is most powerful when it comes from the past, is still relevant today, and motivates us to shape a brighter future.

Hugh Hammond Bennett encapsulated the importance of conservation professionals best when he said, "Many farmers—most farmers, and that means millions—need some technical help in making the change to this more efficient, easier, and more productive type of farming, and they need also moral support and encouragement." Today, this has been expanded from farmers to all people in all communities and watersheds, but what remains the same is you, the one who provides the technical help, the moral support, and encouragement. I can think of no better way to end but how I began—I have so much respect and admiration for the conservation professionals of this nation and beyond, and it is an honor and a privilege to serve as your CEO. I will give it all I have because soil and water conservation and those who practice it mean everything to me.